

Burlington Planning Commission

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Vacant, Youth Member



Burlington Planning Commission Minutes

Tuesday, May 14, 2013 - 6:30 pm

PC Present: Y. Bradley, B. Baker, H. Roen, A. Saba, L. Buffinton (arrived at 7:30)

Absent: A. Montroll, J. Wallace-Brodeur

Staff: S. Thibault, D. White, E. Tillotson

I. Agenda

No changes.

II. Public Forum

Y. Bradley – Opened the public forum at 6:40 pm.

Y. Bradley – Closed the public forum at 6:40 pm.

III. Report of the Chair

The Chair reported that:

- He has been a panelist at the CCE Stormwater Conference a couple days ago and presented on a panel on point source pollution. During his presentation he had an opportunity to plug planBTV. He has participated in a forum for builders, architects, developers where the topic of discussion has been designated growth centers, with affordable housing concerns, a very positive discussion. There has been emphasis on our clean lake and water, Vermont has been ahead of the curve with the water quality for a long time, but the cost of maintaining and improving seems to produce little political fortitude to continue this trend.

IV. Report of the Director

The Director reported that:

- PlanBTV has been to the City Council for the first public hearing on April 29 but there was not good attendance. Some people expressed concerns. There were some inconsistencies discovered in the language in the warning, so the corrected wording is being re-issued and the City Council will hold two more public hearings on June 3 & 10. Action is anticipated on the 10th with the hope that the meetings will be better attended with positive comments. S. Thibault, Comprehensive Planner, has written a memo to the City Council clarifying some points concerning planBTV. She will forward it to the Planning Commission.
- The City Council Ordinance Committee meeting addressing the removal of minimum onsite parking requirements drew a large crowd, with mostly very positive comments. A few were not positive, the Ordinance Committee was interested but cautious. The parking requirements have been a pillar of municipal zoning for fifty years, and to scrap them gives people pause.
- The PIAP team has its first meeting tonight to review project concepts. It will involve smaller projects, the Moran projects, and others.
- S. Thibault and the Director have spent a lot of time on form based coding and are almost through the first draft.

As approved by the Burlington Planning Commission on June 11, 2013.

- Staff examined the Urban Agriculture report last week to determine which portions are zoning pertinent. They will bring recommendations to the ordinance committee in the coming weeks.
- The Railyard Project is having a second meeting next week to discuss alternatives. The public is invited to participate.

V. Public Hearing: ZA-13-11 Adaptive Reuse and Residential Bonuses

D. White: The Commission has seen this proposed change before. It has been back to the Ordinance Committee which modified some language relating to structures that contain nonconforming use in residential districts. The language is cleaned up, the requirements were adjusted to be consistent with inclusionary zoning and address adaptive reuse in residential zones.

H. Roen: In the big picture does this matter if we adopt form based code?

D. White: Not at the moment, form based code could include some residential.

B. Baker: It is good that J. Van Dreische spoke first addressing work/live environments. This ordinance would present some good possibilities.

D. White: The ordinance already allows and encourages residential use, this drives solely at removing an existing nonconforming use. Within inclusionary use, there is additional lot coverage and density allowed.

S. Fortier (UVM): Is the SD Ireland proposed development able to take advantage of any of the several types of bonuses related to this?

D. White: They are not able to take advantage of residential conversion; there is no extra advantage for them.

On a motion by B. Baker, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously approved the ordinance as written and forwarded to the City Council for adoption.

VI. Compact Mixed-Use Development

A presentation was given by Jason van Dreische from Local Motion. This work aimed at identifying barriers to infill development. He has met with D. White and S. Thibault to discuss support this work. A convening of experts was created to discuss and address active long term development. There will be a range of perspectives examined including the builder/contractor aspect of project; a big concept for the City. He has met with this group for three two hour work sessions. He has met with others as well; Preservation Burlington, Paul Bruhn, as well as Pat Buteau, responsible for parking at DPW, and Kate McCarthy from the Vermont Natural Resources Council. Preservation Burlington had a lot of input about project. He hopes the changes that have been made are something that all are comfortable with and hopes now to move forward with good results for all parties. He will be seeking guidance on where we go from here from the Planning Commission and will be guided by planBTV also.

S. Fortier (UVM): Did the group talk about the redevelopment ordinance? No

Y. Bradley: The idea as a group was to shift mindset a little, look at issues differently, and consider the total community benefit.

S. Fortier: Have they considered rating historic structures?

J. Van Dreische: It was discussed in depth. The conversation evolved to where can the city grow? This project involves expansion of the mission for Local Motion to outside of the right of way. The conclusion is that it's necessary to think beyond this, what kind of city are we building for walking and biking?

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H. Roen: Thanks J. van Dreische for all of his good work, which is an excellent backstop to planBTV, and specifically to the parking ordinance. What is the purpose of on the record review?

J. Van Dreische: It means that if the permit is appealed the local process is considered in the appeal and is not de novo. It simplifies the process.

Y. Bradley: Now, the burden of proof is on the developer who has to rehire his experts for second time. Time and money will kill deals. It makes the process too unpredictable, and Burlington is not the easiest to do development in.

H. Roen: This would be more burdensome?

B. Baker: Initially, but not if the appeal goes to the environmental court.

D. White: It doesn't have to be more burdensome, the process is about 90 to 95 percent there now. The objective is to keep it as simple as possible for smaller projects.

S. Fortier: The court would look if process was done appropriate to local ordinance?

Y. Bradley: Another piece that is important, people on boards and commissions give a lot of time, now the environmental court doesn't weigh local time investment.

S. Fortier: It would take into consideration if the ordinance were followed.

B. Baker: Applauds J. Van Dreische for this project. Narrow interests often prevail over wider interests. He doesn't think that the broad perspective is examined enough. Was inclusionary housing included in discussion? This and parking are needed.

J. Van Dreische: The 50 percent use requirement hasn't worked, inclusionary housing was not part of this conversation, as this is a big subject and requires a group for examination but is a difficult piece to tackle and a very big piece of the picture.

Y. Bradley: The project is stretching the boundaries of Local Motion, it's great.

J. Van Dreische: He will bring the project back to Planning & Zoning staff for further refinement and ideas.

VII. Institutional District Zoning Change Request

D. White: Months ago a resident of South Prospect Street requested a zoning amendment to change all permitted uses to conditional uses in that the institutional zoning districts. This would mean that all projects proposed by the institutions would have to go to DRB for review. The Executive Committee discussed this briefly and agreed to bring the question to the full commission. He doesn't know that this gets us anywhere.

L. Buffinton: Does the City sit down with institutions to discuss five or ten year master plans?

D. White: Yes, Champlain College has more specific plans, UVM, tends to be more general, less defined.

L. Buffinton: So the City is informed but the neighborhood may not be aware.

S. Fortier, UVM: There are master plan projects with public involvement, and the wards and the City are involved. Champlain College is much smaller physically and better funded. There is a lot of variety in academic uses. Big projects have many groups involved in the review process. The institutions try to minimize the impact on neighborhoods. UVM's position is that they do not believe that the institution needs to have conditional use review.

D. White: The department recommends that the institutions continue their master planning effort with close city engagement and that master plans be somehow approved by the city.

B. Baker: Proposes that we deny the request.

H. Roen: That makes sense. I do not see the problem that this proposal is meant to address.

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D. White: It comes down to traffic. All institutions participate in a parking management plan. The neighbors have instituted a level of dysfunction in reference to traffic.

S. Fortier: UVM is doing a lot of extra things to make the neighbors happy but college students are noisy.

On a motion by A. Saba, seconded by L. Buffinton, the Commission unanimously rejects the proposal.

VIII. Climate Action Plan

S. Thibault, Comprehensive Planner: Over a year ago, the Planning Commission held its public hearing on the Climate Action Plan and then the Council held its first public hearing July 12, 2012. There were lots of questions and concerns from the Council at the time. The previous draft contained lots of data, but this plan is reformatted to present mostly policies and strategies. Two major changes have been made otherwise, the reduction targets have been adjusted to be more realistic and then a compact-mixed use development goal has been added along with strategies.

Y. Bradley: Dense urban infill promotes urban agriculture.

S. Thibault: The other piece is the energy chapter of the Municipal development Plan was updated with current data and to make reference to the correct Climate Action Plan. We are waiting for the IBM Smart Cities report to see if anything should be added to the Climate Action Plan. In effect the process is starting all over again.

L. Buffinton: Once adopted, this needs to become a reference point for planning.

IX. Committee Reports

None

X. Commissioner Items

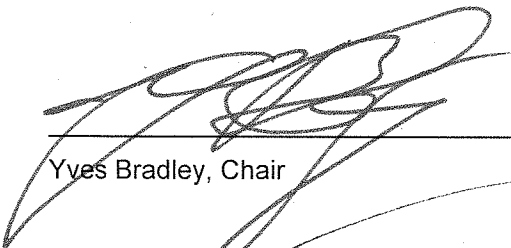
None

XI. Minutes and Communications

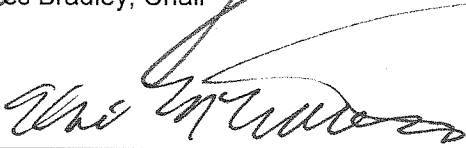
The regularly scheduled meeting on May 28th is canceled; the next meeting will be June 11.

XII. Adjourn

On a motion by H. Roen, seconded by A. Saba the Commission unanimously adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm.


Yves Bradley, Chair


Date


E Tillotson, recording secretary

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